Original Article

The Impact of School Culture on the Students Learning Experiences & Academic Achievement

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Abstract: Each school is deemed to have its own unique cultural identity as a result, no two schools are alike. Every school differs due to differences in cultural characteristics. Every school creates and promotes a unique cultural environment; therefore, it can vary immensely from school to school. A good relationship between teachers and the students in the classroom plays a vital role in effective student learning. School culture is considered the influence of the whole teaching and learning activities. This study explored the influence of school culture on students’ learning. The Study was based on an interpretive research paradigm with the help of primary data collection technique through observation and open-ended interviews to understand participants’ perspectives. Participant observation strategy that has been observed and interacted with the class 12 students considering Mr. Jigyasu, Mr. Chakchake, and Miss. Gyani as my key participant in their everyday practices and activities in one of the public schools. The study used a purposeful sampling technique to select both the research site and participants. Different private and public schools (colleges) in the Kavre district was the study site for this. School culture is a key element for appropriate learning the students. As the students were not checked in terms of uniform or the habits of smoking and bunking the class and using mobile phones unnecessarily in class, the school or college lack the proper discipline that caused disturbance to those who are regular in the school and well disciplined. The practice of violating discipline in the school has provided dissatisfaction and frustration. The study could be an eye-opener for addressing the opinion of students on school cultural practices for learning. Hence this study would support the policy advocacy as Nepal is in a federal structure now, and improvising quality school education is the prime concern of the Local Government. This study has brought multiple realities which could be a unique contribution to leadership literature in adding brick to the educational leaders.

Keywords: school culture, learning experiences, Kavre district

1. INTRODUCTION

No two schools are alike because each has its own cultural identity. Cultural differences distinguish each school. Every school fosters a unique cultural climate, thus it might differ greatly. The school culture may include norms, values, discipline, the school’s landscape, artefacts, teachers’ and students’ behaviour, the administration system, the school’s language, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, feasts and festivals, school day, and parents’ day [1]. School culture is the accepted knowledge, norms, values, discipline, and system behaviour of instructors and students as a school’s tradition. Schools priorities student performance by creating a good learning environment. In
schools, school culture is specific actions to improve student achievement by creating a welcoming learning environment [2]. Teachers and students follow school tradition by solving difficulties with administration, parents, and students. School practices may involve instructors' and students' connections, the principal's role, and student learning through teacher-student contact [3]. It stated a trust is central to school improvement, there must be trusted to build relationships to make a school successful. The positionality and lived experiences of the staff, professors, and administration play a crucial part in the school culture, which may further aid in highlighting the value of trust. It further states that the school must be cooperative, cohesive, efficient, and well-managed to be effective and produce high grades of student learning [4]. Furthermore, a study advocates that administrators must trust the teachers they invite to implement shared decision-making. The students' learning depends on their trust in the teachers that inspire and bind them to attend school for learning. School professionals are more likely to trust & talk honestly among themselves, exposing vulnerability to grow professionally, make decisions jointly to generate school-wide resources, reduce the sense of risk associated with the change to take on reform initiatives, and build public relations with administrators and parents to "do what's best for students," fostering community [5]. The growth of the students depends upon each decision of the teachers. The use of resources in the school and reduction of any risk that may appear in the school are in the hand of the teachers and administrations. The teachers make frequent contact with their students, which makes them able to create a prime position and significantly influence their achievements and sense of well-being [6]. Teachers base their interactions with students on their behavior and interactions with other students, which results in low academic performance. The negative relationship between teachers and students provides fuels for the students to be involved in several malpractices. Spending time with teachers and students helps develop a mutual relationship which may be a vital part of accelerating a culture of success for a building [7]. The school exists solely to provide an effective learning environment or educational achievement. It is acceptable to believe that a student's environment and the norms set out within may influence their learning environment. Research suggests an intertwined relationship between school culture and how students perform academically [8]. The students, just after the SEE examination, are attracted to several eye-catching offers by the schools. But the matter is of concern to either parents or the body of the Government or any other organ paying attention or invigilating whether the students are getting proper environment for learning or not. Are the students having appropriate culture for learning or not? Are they becoming victims of discrimination in the learning process? My experience teaching in various private schools reveals that, except few private schools, most ignore the different matters of school culture. They are just focused on bookish knowledge and a tight schedule of routine. Their focus is mainly on school uniforms and higher pass percentages. The students lag in quality due to the absence of positive school culture. The lack of positive school culture has given birth to many malpractices in the school, like gang fighting, poor quality of students, degrading of morality, etc., which are hindering the learning environment for the students. Research has been conducted on the same topics focusing on the point of view of school leaders or administration and teachers. There is a gap in the voice of the students as to how they perceive all the school practices and cultures for proper learning.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

School connectedness can be defined as a student's perception of their sense of belonging or engagement within the context of the school environment. A good teacher is one who is always concerned about the happiness of their students. They do this by maintaining positive connections with their students, which enables them to attract the attention of any student [9]. When there is a close interaction between students and teachers, pupils are able to learn a great deal and feel at ease in educational settings. It has been discovered that an interpersonal contact between students and
teachers is a component of the culture that enables connectedness and morale. The process of creating and sharing messages between or among individuals is what constitutes communication [10]. There is a possibility that communication plays a more significant part in the development of a decent school culture. In order to establish a positive culture inside the school, it is essential for teachers and students to communicate well with one another [11]. This may help students feel more at ease, and it can also make the learning experience more exciting and fulfilling. The interaction between the teacher and the student in the classroom requires both parties to perform reciprocal roles as it pertains to the transmission and reception of knowledge, as well as the manner in which communication is effective in real life [12]. One of the most important aspects of effective communication is familiarity with and comprehension of the message that is being conveyed, as well as the utilisation of exact language. It made the observation that teachers need to be capable of interacting with students, and that teachers also need to be able to serve as effective role models when it comes to speaking with students [13]. Teachers who possess very strong verbal abilities are able to communicate their thoughts to their students in a more effective manner. A positive school culture is believed to exist when teachers and administrators inside a building are committed to and embrace the same vision and mission for academic success. Schools that have such a culture are said to have a positive school culture [14]. The pupils have the perception that the work they are doing is relevant and that they are finding success. Furthermore, a study noted that students who receive support from their professors at an early stage in their academic careers have a greater likelihood of believing that they are able to continue their studies and achieve success, and they are more likely to emphasise the significance of a strong school culture to others. It would have been impractical for me to arrive at the destination I am at now if I had not received assistance from my instructors [15]. The study discussed the implications for teacher education and teacher development programs. It has also found that school culture influences the school's overall performance and expectations, including the overall satisfaction of students and staff. It has also found that teachers are aware of the importance of the connection between the academic culture created and the academic aspirations of middle school students [16]. School culture and student-teacher relationships are influential factors in the school environment that influence academic expectations, school satisfaction, and academic performance. Natural school culture in building the character value of the students of Muhammadiyah Alam Surya Mentri Elementary School, Surakarata, Indonesia. "Nature is the source of students’ knowledge; students learn to solve problems independently and work in a group." The students learning orientation plays a direct role in the exciting concepts established in the surrounding nature. Teaching in nature school can develop life skills and motivate students to retain knowledge and activities useful for life outside of school [17]. The self-efficacy of science-related students in different school systems, many studies across all STEM disciplines and in general have established the crucial role that self-efficacy (E.E.) plays in student motivation, engagement, perseverance, and academic performance. The school culture and curriculum have an impact on the differences and differences in the roles of these ESSs from many sources [18]. Clear oral examples from interviews with students and teachers accompany the quantitative results. Effective learning and achievement are possible when appropriate school culture is maintained. The school plays a vital role in making a school culture favorable to create good culture and atmosphere for students' learning and teachers' satisfaction [19]. The student-teacher relationship highly influences academic expectations, school satisfaction, and academic performance in school culture. The particular features that contributed to the school culture and climate in Georgia’s first-ranking STEAM-certified elementary school in 2018, showing that their school has increased by two points. Climate Assessment 2014-2018 [20].
3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study was based on an interpretive research paradigm that focused on participants' subjective experiences, as it talks about human behavior and understands how people vary from natural phenomena. The interpretivism is constructed by social actors and people's perceptions of it [21]. The study tried to find subjective knowledge based on the participant's experiences and perceptions through their interaction with them in their particular setting. This paradigm consisted of meaning-oriented methodologies, such as interviewing with open-ended questions or participant stories that rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects. This paradigm consisted of meaning-oriented methodologies, such as interviewing with open-ended questions or participant stories that rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects. Data has been collected with the help of primary data collection technique through observation and open-ended interviews to understand participants' perspectives. My research applied a participant observation strategy that has been observed and interacted with the class 12 students considering Mr. Jigyasu, Mr. Chakhake, and Miss Gyanj as my key participant in their everyday practices and activities in one of the public schools. It has been also observed and had a face-to-face conversation with the staff (librarian and canteen staff), teachers, and students from other classes and employed open-ended questions. A study site is a place where the researcher performs their research and gathers the required information. The study used a purposeful sampling technique to select both the research site and participants. Purposeful sampling means selecting a sample for a specific purpose (Cohen et al., 2018). A study site is where it has performed their research and gathers the required information, different private and public schools (colleges) in the Kavre district was the study site for this.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The practice of the school culture and the students' perception throughout the research especially the school culture such as teacher/student relation and connectedness, communication between students and teachers, and the principal's role and the students' perception on their learning. It has been observed the classroom, the library, the canteen, and other related college artifacts. During the source of data collection different personalities such as students from the bachelor's grade, staff of the canteen and the library, teachers teaching there importantly, the principal or chief of the college has been met. More than this, the field time and again and performed there as a teacher when the subject teacher was absent and sometimes took the class by requesting the teachers as well. It also remained as a student when the teacher taught the students, and sometimes behaved as a student's friend when playing on mobile phones or going to the canteen during tea break time. In doing so many things has been experienced.

4.1 Key Findings

My key insights arise with the scene setting, commencement of the research agenda, and my research question related to the students perception and practice of school culture in their learning, particularly based on the students of grades 11 and 12. I have presented the practice of school culture and the student's perception through prolonged observation in the field. I have explored the experience of my research participants regarding teacher/student relation and connectedness, communication between students and teachers, and the principal's role as per my prolonged observation. Here, I constructed the major insights associated with my research issue and research questions for this exploration. While engaging in the field for a prolonged period, I realized that the interpretative paradigm of research could provide me a lived experience of the students that helped me for multiple meaning-making. The information was generated from three key participants. I believe that the derived insights are noteworthy; however, they are not generalizable. I believe that
research is a systematic and scientific process of finding the truth. Moreover, it is a process of revealing the realities based on the truthful experiences observed by the researcher engaging in the field for a prolonged time along with shared experiences by the participants (key participants and other participants). After remaining in the filed for a prolonged time, I envisioned the following insights from my study. My first research question aimed to search the experience of the students on school culture. As a researcher, spending prolonged time, I explored that the school administration did not pay any attention to students who would not do the homework, bunk the classes and even consume the cigarette. In the process of my observation, Miss. Gyani exposed that the students involved in such habits stay with their elderly brothers or sisters and they do not obey their brother or sister. Miss. Gyani also added that the school administration is silent about such activities of the students. Here, I felt and strongly believe that the success of overall educational institution mostly depends on the role of the principal or school administration. Principal, his attitudes and vision can be the primary tools for the sustainable growth of the institutions. The encouragement to the students to learn smoothly, creating the feeling of a homely environment, trust, respect, understanding, or say, making the students feel as if they are really invited depends on the principal's active role in making regular contact with the students to know their real grounded problems. Here, as a researcher, I explored the lack of proficiency of the principal to build up the feeling of trust and respect and create a homely environment for the students, which is essential for creating a better learning culture in the school. I also envisioned the lack of communication and connectedness between or among the teachers and the students. Due to the not understanding the students by the teachers, some of the students I found left their studies. The behavior of the teacher I envisioned as the main reason for developing the feeling of demotivation and frustration that became the major reason the students for leaving the school eventually. According to Miss. Gyani, one of her friends, was good at studying and would be regular in class. Her friends wanted to study and learn in a friendly environment. She narrated that their teacher punished the friend so badly, which became the major cause of changing one of the laborious and honest students as demotivated and frustrated student who finally left the school. Her friend was absent for the first time due to a headache but was severely punished. It explored that the teacher lacks the ability or capability to understand the psychology of the students. The positive attitude and behavior of the teachers toward the students are essential to maintain a positive school culture. The good bonding between the teachers and the students helps to build a culture of trust with each other where teachers pay full attention to each activity to the students. I witnessed the classroom's cooperative culture. Student help was evident. I took courses when their teacher was gone and coordinated with them. I saw them cooperatively tackling the problem in class. To foster a good school culture, teachers should be kind and engage with pupils. The top student till his SEE grade, Mr. Bikash, seems to lack a good learning culture. He never had a homely setting as in his former school. His teachers, especially the principal, loved him. He received no such support, attention, or love from his teachers or principal. Mr. Bikash complained that his principal did not supervise student and faculty activities. During my observation, he expressed discontent with the school's political independence, which he saw as the principal's weakness. My study's primary participants, Mr. Jigyasu, Miss. Gyani, and Mr. Chakhake, share similar views on the principal. They rarely see the college principal. Principal ignored their issues. Their principal didn't address the teacher's rudeness and bigotry despite their written concerns. Listen to and fix the student's problem if it's real. Otherwise, such activities may divert kids from studying. They may dislike their school or college. I didn't see how inviting theory developed student potential. I investigated a lack of implementation in the studied sector. The invitational hypothesis aspires to make education more engaging, gratifying, and enlightening for all. The theory says an invitation requests friendship or regard. The idea removes negatives that limit learners. My long-term field observation has examined school culture practices that exclude students from companionship and consideration. The philosophy
recommends respecting people's perceptions and building trust. Cooperation and public sense can deliver it. Core remedial measures should accelerate each learning invitation and address each learner's hidden potential. I saw professors and staff dominating and being disrespectful to pupils. I also saw students breaking the code of behaviour. Exploring professors and administration's ignorance to sustain them, which caused students' distrust of their college. I also saw pupils lose hope for a positive learning culture.

5. CONCLUSIONS

School culture is a key element for appropriate learning at the students. As the students were not checked in terms of uniform or the habits of smoking and bunking the class and using mobile phones unnecessarily in class, the school or college lack the proper discipline that caused disturbance to those who are regular in the school and well disciplined. The practice of violating discipline in the school has provided dissatisfaction and frustration. Hence, the school should give priority to establishing a culture of good discipline. It also observed the good students dropping out the school due to the misconduct by the teachers and the lack of communication from the principal. The students should be understood by the teachers. The constitution of Nepal has clearly stated that getting an education is the fundamental right of the citizens (constitution of Nepal, 2072). Hence, the problem of dropping out must be controlled along with the irregularity in the class. It has explored that the teacher behaving so rudely and unfriendly that hindering foster the capability of the students in the process of learning. It has found that the students developed a culture of bunking class and coming to the class late due to the rudeness and unfriendly nature of the teacher. Hence, a friendly school culture should be established in the educational institution for satisfying the students. The participants during observation shared that the principal rarely visit them and observed that complaints were not listened to and justified. It never saw either the principal visiting the classes or other concerned authorities. If the students' problems are not solved, there is no possibility that they would learn and become the manpower as the government requires or they had wished to become before joining the college. The culture of taking the examination and providing scholarships to the students based on their grades sought to be a good school culture. Students in Nepal learn in Nepali or English. My observation shows that kids are in the same class. Nepali and English students attended class. Most Nepalese schools use exams to evaluate students. Nepalese university students are graded using traditional methods like exams. Students said a standard system isn't enough to evaluate them. School should use many fresh and scientific ways. Evaluation criteria include classroom engagement, discipline, morals, etc. Nepalese education emphasises practical skills. curriculum development serves the same purposes. Nepal allows practical marks up to grade 12, except for several courses. Invitational Education is based on the idea that encouragement and self-belief improve learning. The theory also states that learning is better in a loving atmosphere. Its basic idea is 'Learning Invitation'. A learning invitation is a polite appeal to learn. Invitational Education studies how to build and maintain invitational environments. The five 'Powerful Ps' of invitational practice guide the analysis. An institution's culture must incorporate the powerful 'P's—people, places, policies, programmes, and processes—that invite.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following are some recommendation derived from findings of study. The students are the responsible person in the nation. The future of the country, moreover, depends on the students. Hence, as per my observation, the school should maintain the proper discipline to produce loyal citizens. The education policy of Nepal aims to produce competent manpower and the constitution of Nepal clarifies the right to education as a fundamental right but my observation explored the culture of bunking due to the lack of proper supervision and connectedness between teachers and the students.
The teachers were found to be rude and found not having the skills of knowing the students' psychology. Besides, the staff too found to be so unfair in properly behaving the students. It was also found that the teachers use the traditional way of teaching, which may not be justifiable to produce competitive manpower for the market. A scrap of evidence from this study can be helpful to educators to review and redesign appropriate teaching methods considering the practice of school culture to create a proper learning culture. The policymakers can also be benefited from reviewing the existing policy and developing the policy as per the requirement. This study also suggests that teachers adopt new teaching strategies methods in a domination-free learning environment. Furthermore, this study found the students were not valued and trusted. The study also found the students suffering from dissatisfaction and frustration. Hence, this study suggests giving due value to the student's feelings to make better school culture for learning. The study also suggests that teachers behave the students in such a way that they feel they are trusted and valued. This study suggests valuing the students' feelings. The students were found to be evaluated only through the traditional examination system only. This study suggests evaluating the students by adopting other several scientific and modern methods that are practiced in the world. Last but not the least, every professional must recognize the real need of the students and respond to those needs. The professional must contribute to the realization of their rights to get an education in a sound environment. They should study the student's situations and should take proper steps to solve the problems faced by them. School leader could also be benefited to create a school culture better for students learning.

REFERENCES


supportive school culture and teacher collaboration. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 49(3), 430-453.


